

Legal Notice
Chugach National Forest Revised Land Management Plan
Scoping Period for the Proposed Action

As directed by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), the USDA Forest Service is revising the Chugach National Forest's land management plan (forest plan), which requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). Publication of this notice marks the initiation of the public scoping period for the proposed action.

PROPOSED ACTION: The detailed proposed action and related information is available on the Forest's website at: <http://go.usa.gov/cBWvQ>. The proposed action describes the strategic intent of managing the Forest for the next 10 to 15 years and provides management direction in the form of goals, desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines. It identifies management areas and geographic areas across the Forest and estimates the timber sale program quantity. The proposed action describes the plan area's distinctive roles and contributions within the broader landscape, identifies watersheds that are a priority for maintenance or restoration, and identifies the suitability of national forest lands to support a variety of proposed and possible actions that may occur on the plan area over the life of the plan. The proposed action also identifies a monitoring program.

This legal notice coincides with a publication of a notice of intent in the Federal Register to initiate the scoping process, which guides the development of the EIS. Written comments received in response to this notice will be analyzed to further develop the proposed revised forest plan and identify potential significant issues. Significant issues will, in turn, form the basis for developing alternatives to the proposed action.

Comments concerning the proposed action provided in this notice will be most useful in the development of the proposed revised forest plan and draft EIS if received by February 17, 2016. The agency expects to release the proposed revised forest plan and draft EIS for formal comment by summer 2016 and a final EIS and draft record of decision by April 2017.

NATURE OF DECISION TO BE MADE: The responsible official will develop alternatives to the proposed action and decide which alternative best promotes the ecological integrity and sustainability of the Chugach National Forest's ecosystems, watersheds, and diverse plant and animal communities. The responsible official will decide if the plan provides sufficient management guidance to contribute to social and economic sustainability, and to provide people and communities with ecosystem services and multiple uses including a range of social, economic, and ecological benefits for the present and into the future. The responsible official will also determine whether to make new recommendations for Wilderness and other designated areas.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: The responsible official who will approve the Record of Decision is Terri Marceron, Forest Supervisor.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be sent in one of the following ways: 1) via the Forest Plan Revision webpage at <http://go.usa.gov/cBWvQ> or 2) send or deliver written comments to the Chugach National

Forest's Supervisor's Office, Attn: Forest Plan Revision, 161 East 1st Street, Door 8, Anchorage, AK 99501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary C. Rasmussen, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader, at mcrasmussen@fs.fed.us or (907) 743-9500.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: The public engagement strategy for early 2016 will focus on issue identification and alternative development. Engagement tools include: keeping the Plan Revision webpage updated; notifying mailing list subscribers and interested parties when information is available; and soliciting invitations to stakeholder meetings to present additional forest plan revision information. Additional comment periods and public meetings will be scheduled to coincide with the availability of the revised forest plan and draft environmental impact statement expected in July 2016. This action is subject to the objections procedures of 36 CFR part 219, subpart B.